

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

Please replace the claims with the claims provided in the listing below wherein status, amendments, additions and cancellations are indicated.

1. (Currently Amended) A method of improving moisture retention ability of skin and/or treating or protecting skin for another purpose, comprising applying to skin a composition comprising [[a]] at least one compound selected from the group consisting of ethanolamine, 2-methoxyethylamine, O-phosphorylethanolamine, 2-ethylaminoethanol, diethanolamine, 2-dimethylaminoethanol, choline, 2-amino-2-hydroxymethyl-1,3-propanediol, noradrenalin, phenethylamine, ethylenediamine, taurine, phosphatidylethanolamine, N-(2-hydroxyethyl)acetoamide, 2-(methylamino)ethanol, 2-anilinoethanol, 2-(benzylamino)ethanol, 3-amino-1-propanol, 2-amino-1-butanol, putrescine, DL-pyroglutamic acid and triethanolamine.

2. (Original) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the composition further comprises L-arginine.

3. (Original) The method according to Claim 2, wherein the compound and/or L-arginine originate in a rice preparation.

4. (Original) The method according to Claim 2, wherein the compound originates in a rice preparation.

5. (Original) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the composition further comprises a rice preparation in admixture with the compound.

6. (Original) The method according to Claim 2, wherein the composition further comprises L-arginine and/or a rice preparation in admixture with the compound.

7. (Original) The method according to any one of Claims 3-6, wherein the rice preparation is produced by hydrating rice or crushed rice, adding amylase or protease and allowing to react, and adding yeast following completion of the reaction to perform saccharification and fermentation.

8. (Currently Amended) The method according to any one of Claims 3-6, wherein the rice preparation is produced by hydrating rice or crushed rice, adding one, two or all of amylase, protease and lipase, heating, and extracting by heating and optionally [[or]] repeating these reactions at least once.

9. (Original) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the compound originates in an animal, plant or microbial preparation.

10. (Original) The method according to Claim 2, wherein the compound and/or L-arginine originate in an animal, plant or microbial preparation.

11. (Original) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the composition further comprises an animal, plant or microbial preparation in admixture with the compound.

12. (Original) The method according to Claim 2, wherein the composition further comprises L-arginine and/or an animal, plant or microbial preparation in admixture with the compound.

13. (Original) The method according to any one of Claims 9-12, wherein the animal, plant or microbial preparation is produced by fermenting an animal, plant or microbial substance, or adding a fermenting sugar, followed by fermentation.

14. (Currently Amended) The method according to any one of Claims 9-12, wherein the animal, plant or microbial preparation is produced by adding water, as

necessary, to the animal, plant or microbial material, adding one, two or all of amylase, protease and lipase, heating, and extracting by heating and optionally [[or]] further repeating these reactions at least once.

15. (Original) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the skin to which the composition is applied requires prevention, prevention of exacerbation or treatment of atopic dermatitis.

16. (Original) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the skin to which the composition is applied requires moisturization.

17. (Original) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the skin to which the composition is applied requires restoration of the barrier mechanism and function thereof.

18. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the skin to which the composition is applied requires conditioning of a corneal layer thereof.

19. (Original) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the skin to which the composition is applied requires conditioning of epidermal keratocytes thereof.

20. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the skin to which the composition is applied requires conditioning of an epidermis thereof.

21. (Original) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the compound is applied to the skin in the form of a combination of the compound and a moisture retention agent.

22. (Original) The method according to Claim 21, wherein the moisture retention agent comprises one or more substances selected from the group consisting of polyvalent alcohols selected from the group consisting of glycerin, dipropylene glycol and 1,3-buteneglycol; sugars selected from the group consisting of sorbitol, maltitol, dextrin, hyaluronic acid and chitosan; mucopolysaccharides and sugar derivatives; polypeptides selected from the group consisting of elastin and collagen; organic acids and their salts selected from the group consisting of pyrrolidone carboxylic acid, citric acid, lactic acid and salts thereof; biopharmaceutical and natural moisture retention agents selected from the group consisting of refined rice wine, rice bran, aloe, licorice and chamomile; bio-component moisture retention agents selected from the group consisting of vitamins, placental extract, urea, lecithins, phospholipids, ceramides, cholesterol and sphingolipids; and vegetable extracts, fruit extracts, kelp extracts, enzymes and inorganic salts; and further comprises one or more substances selected from the

group consisting of animal oils, vegetable oils, hydrocarbons, higher alcohols and esters.

23. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the composition further comprises a drug and/or base that can be used in externally applied skin preparations, ~~as pharmaceuticals, quasi-drugs and cosmetics.~~

24. (Original) The method according to Claim 23, wherein the drug comprises one or more kinds of substances selected from the group consisting of bactericidal drugs, wound protective agents, wound healing agents, drugs for suppurative diseases, analgesic, anti-itching, astringent and antiphlogistic agents, immunosuppresants, drugs for parasitic skin diseases, skin softeners, hair agents, vitamin agents and biopharmaceuticals, and the base comprises one or more kinds of substances selected from the group consisting of moisture retention agents, astringents, refrigerants, antioxidants, ultraviolet absorbers, infrared dispersants, preservatives, antibiotics, chelating agents, surfactants, foaming agents, stabilizers, penetrants, assistants, pH adjusters, buffers, emulsifiers, opacifiers, fragrances and pigments.

25. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the skin to which the composition is applied requires ~~prevention or treatment of~~ at least one

skin disease selected from the group consisting of atopic dermatitis, dry skin symptoms, pruritis, frostbite, cracking, chapped skin, skin aging symptoms, skin damage caused by ultraviolet rays, darkening, blackening, skin disorders arising in the epidermis, physicochemical skin disorders, skin symptoms caused by the use of water, soap, detergents, surfactants or solvents, adverse side effects of externally applied skin preparations, biological skin disorders, dermatitis and eczema.

26. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 25, wherein dry skin symptoms are symptoms selected from atopic skin, dry or rough skin, aged skin, ichthyosis, ~~dry skin~~, chapped skin, asteatosis, xeroderma, dry eczema, facial dry eczema ~~and~~ or progressive volar keratoderma, and/or selected from erythema, sclerosis or ~~and~~ cornification, cracking, scaling, wrinkles, itching ~~and~~ or dry marks, while skin aging symptoms are selected from wrinkles or ~~and~~ decreased skin tightness and elasticity, skin damage caused by ultraviolet rays is selected from spots or ~~and~~ freckles, skin disorders arising from the epidermis are selected from turnover abnormalities, fineness or ~~and~~ moistness, physicochemical skin disorders are selected from cuts, burns or ~~and~~ floor burns, biological skin disorders are selected from athlete's foot or ~~and~~ skin infections, and ~~inflammatory~~ cornification ~~is disorders~~ are selected from the group consisting ~~[[to]]~~ of dermatitis ~~and~~ or eczema.

27. (Withdrawn) The method according to Claim 25, wherein the skin disease is skin aging symptoms.

28. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 25, wherein the skin disease is at least one selected from the group consisting of darkening, wrinkles and decreased skin tightness and elasticity, and spots.

29. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim ~~[[1]]~~ 23, wherein the externally applied skin preparations comprise pharmaceuticals, quasi-drugs, or cosmetics. ~~cosmetic, quasi-drug or pharmaceutical.~~

30. (New) The method according to Claim 3, comprising obtaining said L-arginine from rice.

31. (New) The method according to claim 1, wherein said skin has atopic dermatitis.

32. (New) The method according to claim 21, wherein the moisture retention agent comprises 1,3-butylene glycol.



33. (New) The method according to claim 24, wherein said skin suffers from inflammation.

34. (New) The method according to claim 1, wherein said composition comprises ethanolamine.

35. (New) The method according to claim 1, wherein said compound comprises ethanolamine and said composition further comprises L-arginine.

36. (New) The method according to claim 34, wherein said composition comprises 0.004% to 1% of ethanolamine.

37. (New) The method according to claim 2, wherein said composition comprises 0.04% to 1% of L-arginine.

38. (New) The method according to claim 35, wherein said composition comprises 0.004% to 1% of ethanolamine and 0.04% to 1% of L-arginine.

39. (New) The method according to claim 35, wherein said composition comprises 0.004% to 0.02% of ethanolamine and 0.04% to 0.2% of L-arginine.

40. (New) The method according to Claim 2, comprising obtaining said L-arginine from rice, said obtaining comprising:

crushing rice;

adding water,  $\alpha$ -amylase, protease, and pepdidase to said rice to obtain a mixture and heating said mixture to a first temperature for a predetermined duration;

gradually raising a temperature of said mixture to a second temperature to perform extraction by heating;

cooling said mixture from said second temperature, press-filtering to obtain a filtrate, and lowering a pH of said filtrate;

adding acidic protease and acidic carboxypeptidase to said filtrate and allowing a reaction to occur for a predetermined duration;

heating said filtrate to a third temperature and cooling said filtrate to obtain an L-arginine composition.

41. (New) Method according to claim 1, wherein said composition is applied to skin for an amount of time effective to treat atopic dermatitis.

42. (New) Method according to claim 1, wherein said composition is applied to skin for an amount of time effective to improve said moisture retention ability of skin.